



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

## Correspondence.

(From our Travelling Correspondent.)

PHILADELPHIA, Jan. 10, 1855.

MY FRIENDS:—

THE leisure hour you named is here, and now I think of you, and devote myself (an annoyed traveller) to you, while I remain till the coach comes. My first impressions are, that the Avenue, which all Philadelphians quote as their "Cynosure," is not what it was at my first visit, some fifteen years ago. Then, Chestnut street was narrow, and filled with old-fashioned buildings of a peculiarly brick-and-white monotony. Fire, whether incendiary or accidental, has done the work of removing much, and now the street, between Third and Twelfth streets, wears an aspect of varied and picturesque interest, from many modern prominent buildings, devoted to business purposes, either already completed or in progress of erection. Among them are the stores of Jayne, Swaim, Havel, Howell, the Girard House, Tract Society, and others not yet tenanted or completed. Granite was, as in New York, the first popular stone, but gave way to brown stone and marble, and both of these seem yielding to iron, which is largely employed; even the side-walk, corner of Fifth street, is of that material. Not being *au fait* in the technics of architecture, I will not assume to say which are orthodox or not, in design—some of them, to my eye, are devoid of beauty, though they may, notwithstanding, have fitness. The noblest looking building in progress is one of white marble, for the Farmers and Mechanics Bank. The front unites elegance of proportion and solidity of construction in a degree not frequent in these days of make-as-much-of-as-little-as-you-can. Further west, on the same side of the street, is an edifice of brown stone, Gothic in design, and large in size, intended for a Masonic hall, the lower part fitted for stores. Were its situation further removed from contiguous buildings, it would be more imposing. Much of the work about the windows is, unnecessarily, of wood, less durable, though less expensive than stone. Across from this, is a group of stores in brown stone, one of which is to be fitted for Earles' picture and frame store, and in a style promising to be an attractive addition to the Art facilities of the place. Chestnut street is much improved by the apparent widening of it; the majority of buildings recently put up, being placed back from the former frontage of the lots, a space of four to six feet.

There is a great deal of Art to be seen in Philadelphia in frame and book stores, private collections, studios, and in the never-closing galleries of the Pennsylvania Academy, where old masters and new hang side by side. It has a fine location, easily accessible, near the tumult of business, but yet removed from it. The building is rather showy, well arranged, and fitted with furniture of quiet, appropriate color. Statuary is prominent: a colossal group in plaster, of great merit, by Lough, "Combat between the Centaurs and a Lapithæ," occupies the centre of the rotunda; other works, by Steinhausen and Rinaldi, are

there also; a copy of the Gates of the Baptistery of Florence. Pictures by Allston, West, Sully, Opie, Reynolds, and Vernet, and a host of other artists are there. Among modern works are the "Convalescent," by Hubner, of Dusseldorf—"First Singing of the Marseillaise," by Guffens—"Venetian Night Scene," by Stange, of Munich, and prominent above all others is "The Deliverance of Leyden," by B. Wittkamp, a Hollander. This is a large canvas, about the dimensions of Leutze's Washington. It is well worth a long journey to see, and, in my humble opinion, is beyond question the most excellent historical work in the United States. It is somewhat painful in incident, portraying the famishing of a besieged populace, cut off from the necessities of life. The moment is when the worthy burgomaster offers himself a sacrifice, that his flesh may prolong the life of some of the dying around him. Succor has arrived, but he knows it not—many of the crowd perceive it, and urge their weaker brethren to keep their courage up a little longer. But though painful in subject, so elevated are the conception and treatment, that the spectator is compelled to sympathize with it, and he feels that a heroism worthy of humanity has been put on canvas. The grouping is easy, simple, natural, masterly,—life, motion, feeling, and sentiment are all happily expressed; the drawing is correct, vigorous, and large; some of the foreground figures quite colossal in size. Separate parts are fine studies of color and worthy of close scrutiny. The manipulation is the work of an accomplished hand, but, like the color, is throughout kept subservient to the demands of a pure and refined intellectual taste, which renders the sentiment the supreme feature. Could not our National Academy of Design make some arrangements by which our citizens should have an opportunity of seeing it?

A School of the Antique is open daily in the building for students; some copies in oil were also being made; the number of pupils I did not learn, the janitress having her noontide meal to discuss, left me alone, first kindly providing me with a catalogue.

The Art Union had an unsatisfactory look; the pictures were few, and not of high order. Rothermel's "Patrick Henry," Winner's "Oath of Brutus on the Death of his Daughter," the best of the lot.

Elsewhere I saw some clever landscapes by W. J. Richards, who seems an admirer of our Cropsey's pencil. The collections of Miss Carey, Mr. E. P. Mitchell, Mr. Sill, Mr. Bailey, Mr. Charnley, and some others, I had not leisure to see.

My attendant darkie, who guessed from the mud on my boots I came from Gotham, says the "coach am ready, massa." So adieu.

Yours,

W. C.

## A CRITICAL MADNESS.

In the days when Hippolito de'Medici was still a youth, and the Cardinal of Cortona governed Florence in the name of Pope Clement, a certain Abbot from Lombardy, on his way to Rome, was desirous of seeing the new Sacristy

of St. Laurence, which had been recently adorned by the immortal labors of Michael Angelo. He accordingly called for this purpose on the Prior of that establishment, who, referring him to a young man (named Tasso) for his conductor, commanded the latter, in an especial manner, to point out to his reverence all that was most worthy of observation in that illustrious edifice. The Abbot (who was a man of taste, and critical judgment), after having surveyed the divine sculptures with vast attention, observed, "Upon my word, very tolerable figures—but not what I should have expected neither. I see now, that this Michael is no God Almighty upon earth, as people represent him to be. The statues at Count Pepoli's would stand a comparison with these; yet they were done by Noddo, or by some such person, little better than a common stone-cutter." Master Tasso, hearing this, immediately set down the reverend visitor for a piece of solemn impertinence; but for the time said nothing, and passed on toward the library.

Passing through the church, in their way to that apartment, the Abbot asked many questions, as to when it was built, and who was the architect, and, without waiting for the answer, went on in the same strain. "Faith, I do not altogether dislike this building; however, it can't be compared to our St. —'s at Bologna." Master Tasso would have burst with laughing at this, had not anger somewhat restrained him, and forced him to mutter between his teeth, "If your reverence be as well learned in Holy Writ as in Sculpture and Architecture, ye must needs be a great bachelor in theology." "Friend," replied the Abbot, somewhat offended, but not at all understanding the sarcasm, "Deo gratias, I am no bachelor, but a master in theology."

They now reached the Cloisters, and ascending the wooden stair-case which leads to the library, and looking up at the cupola, the Abbot remarked, "So this is the famous cupola of which all the world has been talking." "And surely with just reason," answered Master Tasso. "Where has your reverence ever seen so beautiful a performance? The lantern especially is beyond all praise." The Abbot, slightly curling his lip to an expression of condescending derision, "So you say, Florentian; but I have been told by persons most worthy of credit, that the Cupola at Porcia is a thousand times more beautiful and more skillfully finished."

At this Master Tasso's anger rose beyond all bounds, and seizing the reverend Abbot by the shoulders, and tripping up his heels, he fairly tumbled him from the top of the stairs to the bottom. The rest of the adventure may be read at large in the eighth novel of the First Supper of Anton Francesco Grazzini, surnamed "Il Lesca." The details are not much to our present purpose; but the substance of them is, that the bruised and almost murdered Abbot preferred his charge of assault and battery against Master Tasso, who rested his defence on the assertion, that the Abbot, being seized with a sudden fit of insanity, had thrown himself headlong down the stairs. The only evidence he adduced in support of his plea was, that of one who had heard his reverence's comparison of the cupola of San Lorenzo to that of Porcia; and the evidence was deemed sufficient fully to establish the fact of the madness, and to render the remainder of the narrative so probable, that Master Tasso was fully acquitted, and the venerable critic left to digest (like poor imprisoned Malvolio) the double injury of his limbs and understanding, as well as he was able.—*Blackwood*, 1822.

\* It is just possible that this anecdote may refer to Bernardo Tasso, the father of the "Divine Torquato," and himself a poet of no little eminence. We should be sorry to lose it out of the family.